

Colombia 2016 – Western and Central Andes, Departments of Valle del Cauca, Risaralda, Caldas.

This was our first trip to Colombia and it was a good introduction. We really enjoyed the country, people, and birds. The locations visited were suggested by my friend Jeff Harding who has extensive experience in birding Colombia. Jeff also recommended Rubén Dario as a guide for our time in Valle del Cauca area. This trip was self organized, we made all reservations and travel arrangements ourselves. We reserved only the first few days of lodging Cali and the Reserva Rio Blanco stay ahead of time, preferring to have the freedom of traveling without a fixed schedule. We chose to have a guide for the first 5 days then to travel on our own for the remaining 10 days, using the required local guides at Rio Blanco and Otún Quimbaya. We speak some Spanish and have visited, driven, and birded in several other countries in Latin America. Driving and navigation in the cities was not easy but doable, GPS really helped. Driving in the countryside was much easier with all the usual driving in Latin America considerations.

We recorded 365 birds during the trip, including 94 life species. Department totals: 239 in Valle del Cauca, 147 in Caldas, 72 in Risaralda.

Complete species lists, google map links, and selected photos for each site are in the linked eBird Checklist.

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Valle del Cauca Itinerary

Friday 2/5/2016: Depart Portland, Oregon 4:30pm, flights to Salt Lake City, Miami, then Cali. American Airlines. Poor connections due to using frequent flier miles for the fare.

Saturday 2/6/2016: Arrive in Cali, Valle de Cauca, Colombia at about 10:30pm after about 27 hrs. in transit. Airport pick up by Rubén Dario Palacio, Ecotone Tours www.ecotonetours.com. Rubén was our guide for the next 5 days. We had a great experience birding with Rubén. He is knowledgeable about the birds, song and habitat. He brings an honest enthusiasm to the effort. He responded well to unexpected events and had a flexible approach that we appreciated. Rubén is fluent in English and pleasant to spend time with in the field. We can recommend his services without hesitation.

Lodging at hotel MS Centenario in Cali.

Sunday 2/7/2016: Pick up rental car at Colombia Renta Car. We rented a 4x4 vehicle, the extra ground clearance was necessary many times. We rented a Garmin GPS, also necessary many times, especially in cities. <http://www.colombiarentacar.co>, colombiarentacar@gmail.com at mid morning.

Ascended Hwy 19 west from Cali to bird at **Finca Alejandria**, in the KM 18 area approximately 35 minutes from Cali., <http://fincaalejandria.jimdo.com>, <https://goo.gl/maps/TD1KqQx6G1w>, fincaalejandria@gmail.com. 14 species of hummingbirds, tanagers including Multicolored Tanagers at feeders and garden area. Owners Raul and Elsa prepared a lunch of Asado Argentino while we watched the feeders. Small entry fee. It was a Sunday afternoon so lots of families and groups enjoying the mountain air, food and hummingbirds. BWIC site 85.

eBird checklist: <http://eBird.org/eBird/view/checklist?subID=S27459607>

Road birding a few km further along road from Finca Alejandria to North, the general area of **Bosque de Niebla Km. 18**: Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Scarlet-fronted Parakeets, Barred Parakeets, Oleaginous Hemispingus.

eBird checklist: <http://eBird.org/eBird/view/checklist?subID=S27459640>

Returned to Cali continuing on gravel road via **Dapa** area, road birding the scenic route back.

eBird Checklist: <http://eBird.org/eBird/view/checklist?subID=S27459608>

Lodging in Cali, MS Centenario



Multicolored Tanager at gardens of Finca Alejandria.

Monday 2/8/2016: Laguna Sonso. Arrived at about 7 am, because of unannounced policy changes we were informed by the guard we could not enter without a Buga local. Ruben called Olmira, a local guide and teacher for the reserve from Buga, arranging for her to join us. We birded the entrance area and Rio Cauca banks until she arrived about 45 minutes later. Entering the Reserve, we walked into the lake area from the west side to the tower area. BWIC site 84. Apical Flycatchers, Ruby-Topaz Hummingbird, Spectacled Parrotlet, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Bar-crested Antshrike. At the lake area our guide located three distant Horned Screamers, many shorebirds and waders. We returned to the Laguna Sonso compound finding Common Potoo and Common Nighthawk roosts.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459603>

We birded about 5 km northwest of Buga to a remnant wetland **Humedal El Conchal**, surrounded by sugarcane fields. Notable were 2 close Horned Screamers, Fulvous, White-face, and Black-bellied Whistling-ducks, Pearl Kite.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27463640>

Lunch in Buga followed by short stop at **Parque Natural Regional El Vínculo** in the warm afternoon. Small entry fee. Dry scrub forest just a bit above the eastern edge of the Carca river valley, elevation about 900 meters. Notable birds, Colombian Chachalaca, Apical Flycatcher, Rufous-naped Greenlet, Guira Tanager.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459649>

Lodging in Cali, MS Centenario.



Left: Apical Flycatcher. Right: Horned Screamers (Digiscoped)

Tuesday 2/9/2016: Ascended from Cali westerly to **Bosque de San Antonio/KM 18**, exiting Hwy 19 to left at about km 16. This is an area where Ruben has an ongoing point count bird census. From the last house we walked up the gravel road a few km to summit with radio towers overlooking Cali to the east. Elevation about 2000 to 2300 meters. BWIC site 85. Highland Timamou (heard), Wedge-billed Hummingbird, Spotted Barbtail, Saffron-crowned Tanager, White-naped Brushfinch, Golden-rumped Euphonia.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459600>

Lunch at La Cabana along Hwy 19, hummingbird feeders.

eBird checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459634>

About 3 pm we visited Andean Cock-of-the-rock Lek, ebird hotspot **Lek - Gallito de Roca**, about 6 active males on lek.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459595>

Lodging at El Queremal, El Campanario Hotel,



Male of Andean Cock-of-the-rock at lekking site.

Wednesday 2/10/2016: From Queremal bird along **Old Buenaventura Road** (low traffic) for about 10 km.

Tawny-bellied Hermit, Torrent Tyrannulet, Scytalopus sp. *Scytalopus sp.* Alto_pisones

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459642>

Restaurant El Descanso de Doña Dora for a breakfast of pericos (scrambled eggs with tomatoes and onions) and bird feeders. Elevation 1250 meters, KM 55. White-whiskered Hermit, White-tailed Hillstar, Velvet-purple Coronet, Rufous-throated Tanager, Silver-throated Tanager.

eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459617>

Descended to El Danubio area along old Buenaventura Road, **Río Anchicayá, Carreterra Buenaventura--Km 48-60**

eBird checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459645>

Lunch in El Danubio, then birding in **Bajo Anchicayá** area along old Buenaventura

Road, much of the time at one fruiting tree area. Latitude: 3.612480° N. Longitude: 76.896623° W, Altitude: 288 m. Excellent forests in this area. BWIC site 86. Banded Puffbird, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Spot-crowned Barbet, Moustached Antwren, Slaty-capped Shrike-vireo, Rufous-winged Tanager, Scarlet-browed Tanager, Lemon-spectacled Tanager, Tricolored (Choco) Brushfinch, Slate-colored Grosbeak.
eBird Checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459610>
Lodging at El Queremal, El Campanario Hotel

Thursday 2/11/2016: Return to **Bajo Anchicayá** area along old Buenaventura Road. to La Cascada. Latitude: 3.622674° N, Longitude: 76.928243° W, Altitude: 500 m. Fasciated Tiger-heron, Laughing Falcon, Choco Toucan, Great Antshrike, Slaty-capped Shrike-vireo, Scaly-breasted Wren, Golden-chested Tanager, Gray-and-gold Tanager, Scarlet-and-white Tanager,
eBird checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459647>
Restaurant El Descanso de Doña Dora for coffee and bird feeders, Dona Dora prepared a great to go lunch wrapped in banana leaves. Elevation 1250 meters, KM 55. Red-faced Spinetail, Tricolored (Choco) Brushfinch.
eBird checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27459620>
Lodging in Cali, MS Centenario



Left: Rufous-throated Tanager at Queremal feeders. Right: Golden-chested tanager at Anchicaya road.

Friday 2/12/2016: RN Forestal Bosque de Yotoco, elevation 1600 meters. Early in the morning we birded trails on west side (across highway) from buildings, later walking the trails on the east side, and the area around the buildings. BWIC site 83. Bar-crested Antshrike, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, Venezuelan red howler monkeys
eBird checklist: <http://ebird.org/ebird/pnw/view/checklist?subID=S27455040>
End of Valle del Cauca itinerary.